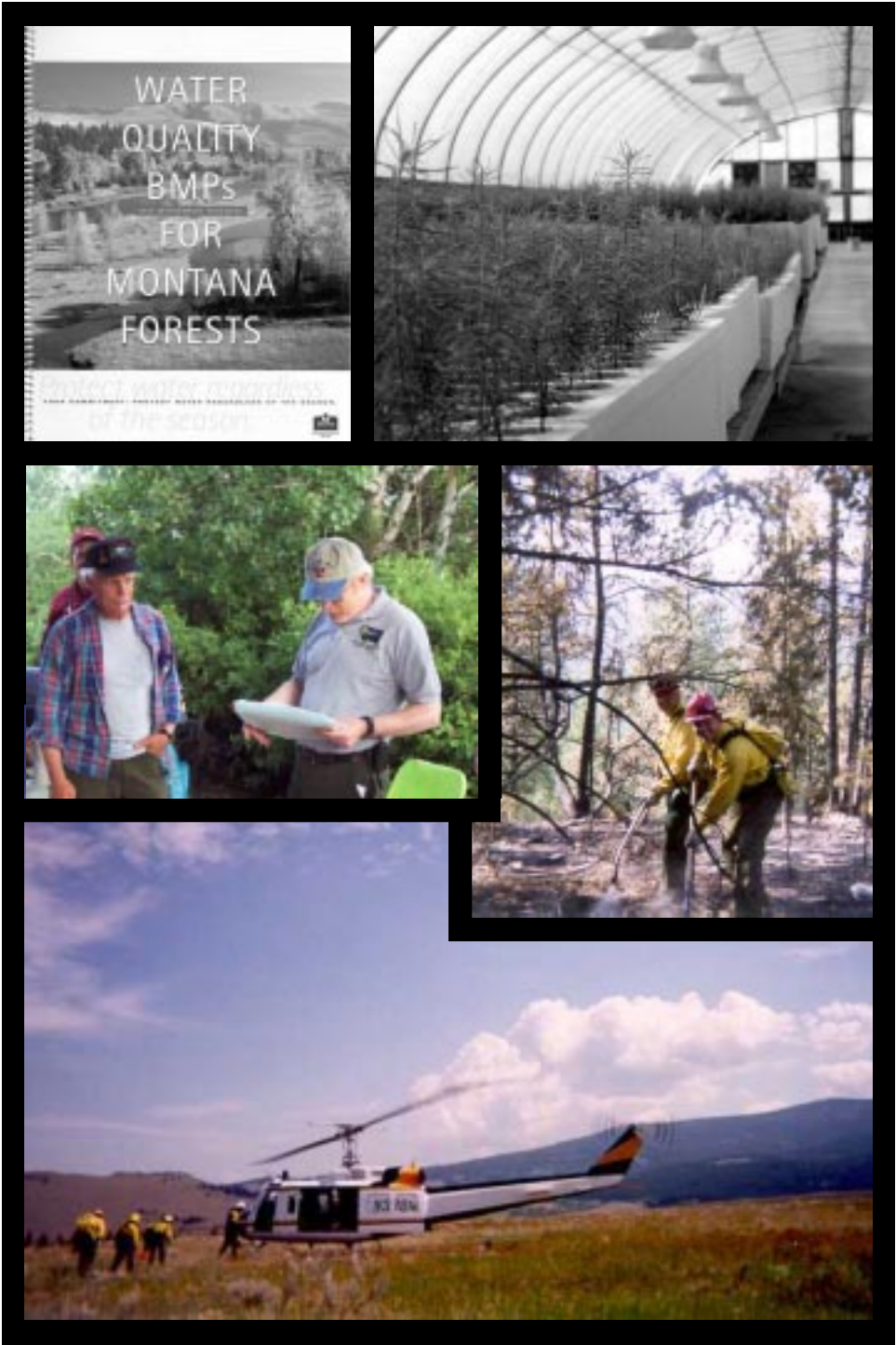


FORESTRY DIVISION



(LEFT) BOB LOGAN, MSU EXTENSION FORESTRY
(RIGHT) DAN BUSHNELL

(LEFT) DAN BUSHNELL
(RIGHT) JARID CLARK

JARID CLARK

FORESTRY DIVISION

Protecting Montana's natural resources from wildland fires through regulation and partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, and helping Montanans achieve land stewardship and compliance with state forestry laws.

The Forestry Division, headquartered in Missoula, is responsible for planning and implementing forestry programs through a network of field offices located across the state. The forestry program has two major functions: fire and aviation management, and service forestry. Each function is further broken down into programs and subprograms, most with statewide application. The Forestry Division has the following goals:

- Protecting the state's natural resources from wildfire, insect pests, and disease
- Sustaining or improving the natural resources of private forestland for the good of all Montanans
- Promoting and supporting conservation practices on all lands in Montana
- Enforcing the state's forest practices laws in a manner that is both fair and consistent to all parties, and that complies with the intent of the legislation
- Encouraging the maintenance, planting, and management of trees and shrubs in Montana communities

Fire and Aviation Management

As charged by state law, DNRC protects the natural resources of the state from fire and is responsible for fire protection on all forestlands within this state that are officially classified by the department as forestlands.

Protection

DNRC's Fire and Aviation Management Bureau is a team of trained professionals providing wildland fire service leadership to Montana, commissioned by Montana citizens to protect the natural resources of the state by preventing and suppressing wildland fires, and accountable to Montana citizens. Presently, all wildlands in Montana have some form of fire protection. DNRC protects natural resources on state and private lands through aggressive fire prevention and protection activities. A total of 50,554,670 acres of state-owned and private lands are protected as detailed in state resource management plans, or as required by law (see Table 12). The Fire and Aviation Program staffs 65 engine (and water tender) companies and 5 helicopters to provide direct protection of 5.2 million acres. The program also loans over 350 engines and water tenders to local fire agencies, primarily in the eastern part of the state. DNRC has been given the responsibility to coordinate all contract responses of fire department resources that cross county lines.

Direct Protection

DNRC provides direct protection to a total of 5,169,477 acres consisting of 3,499,046 acres of state and private land; 694,665 acres of U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands; 4,551 acres of Tribal/U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) lands; 18,117 acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) lands; 2,776 acres of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) lands; and 950,322 acres of U. S. Forest Service (USFS) lands. Privately owned forested lands within the boundaries of an incorporated city are included. Priority is given to the protection of forested lands owned by the state.

State/County Cooperative Fire Protection

Under the State/County Cooperative Fire Protection Program, the department has secondary protection responsibility for 45,309,480 acres of state-owned and privately owned non-forested lands. These lands are predominantly found in eastern Montana. A network of 400 fire departments provides initial response to wild-fires in the 56 counties. DNRC assists on fires that escape the counties' capabilities and provides them with training, prevention materials, and equipment.

Contracted Federal Protection

Fire protection of a total of 1,746,144 acres of state and private lands is subcontracted to federal agencies.

Table 12
Fire Protection by DNRC in FY 2002

Total Acres	Category	State and Private Lands (Acres)	Public Lands (Acres)
5,169,477	DNRC Direct Protection State and Private Lands BLM Lands USFS Lands Tribal/BIA Lands USBR Lands FWS Lands	3,499,046	694,665 950,322 4,551 2,776 18,117
45,309,480	State/County Cooperative Fire Protection ¹	45,309,480	
1,746,144	Federal Direct Protection ² Protected by BIA (Tribal) Protected by BLM Protected by USFS Protected by FWS	147,609 68,875 1,492,790 36,870	
52,225,101	TOTALS	50,554,670	1,670,431

1. Includes all 56 counties in Montana

2. Subcontracted to federal agencies

Fire Prevention

The Fire Prevention Program's purpose is to reduce the number and severity of wildfires occurring each year. The program is made up of three parts.

- Engineering through prescribed fire (and airshed management), fuel treatment programs, and application of DNRC's wildland/residential development guidelines
- Education through homeowner programs (like Firewise Communities), workshops, and production of printed and electronic material
- Enforcement through Forest Fire Regulations, fire cause investigation, and forest restrictions when applicable

Wildland/residential interface areas continue to be emphasized through National Fire Plan funding. Ongoing projects include fuel treatment, home fire safety evaluations, and prioritizing communities at risk.

DNRC has completed its fire risk rating on 95 percent of the direct protection areas that are determined to be high risk. Several hundred plats of proposed developments are evaluated annually, and recommendations are then submitted to county commissioners based on DNRC's Fire Protection Guidelines. The Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland/Residential Interface Development continue to be applied to existing and proposed developments throughout the state.

Major issues in FY 2002 include implementation and monitoring of programs funded by the National Fire Plan, implementation of a revised forest restriction process, and promotion of ongoing educational programs.

Fire Suppression

Through the Fire Suppression Program, DNRC directly protects 5,169,477 acres of state, private, and federal lands; assists all 56 cooperating counties with fires exceeding their capabilities on 45,309,480 acres of state and private lands; and subcontracts fire protection on 1,746,144 acres of state and private lands to the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (Tribal). DNRC also provides support and assistance to federal fire agencies and other states when appropriate.

The number of fires that occurred during the 2001 fire season was slightly below the five-year average; 334 fire incidents that burned a total of 16,758 acres were reported (see Figures 9 and 10). The average number of fires over the last five years is 384 per year, and the average number of acres burned over each of the last five years is 62,341. The annual acreage burned varied from 3,419 acres in 1997 to 167,582 acres in 2000.

Figure 9
Number of Fires on State-Protected Land

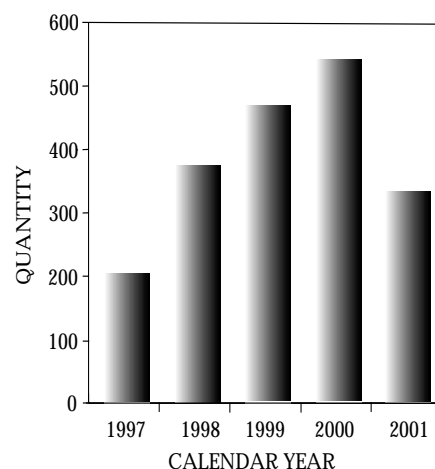


Figure 10
Acres Burned on State-Protected Land

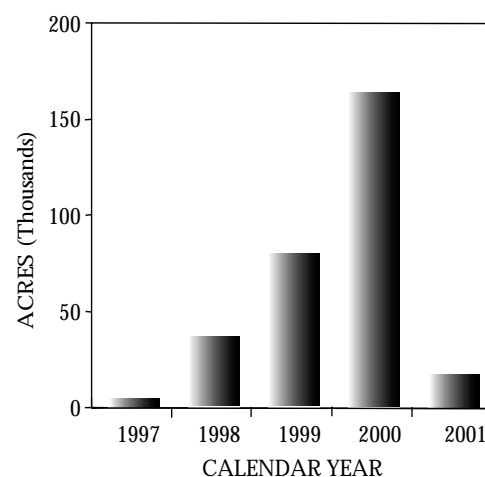
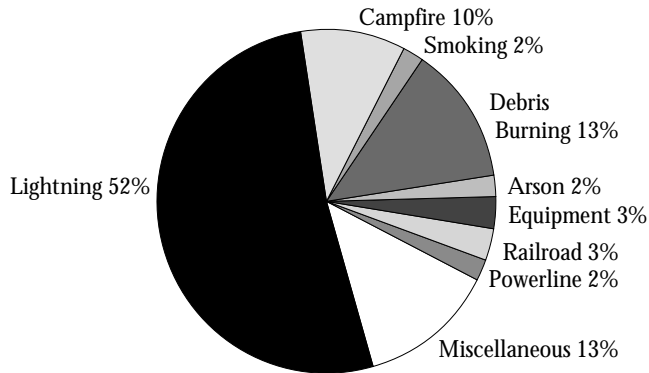


Figure 11
Percentage of Fires, by Cause
(5-Year Average)



Lightning is the single most frequent cause, starting 52 percent of the fires (see Figure 11). DNRC contained an average of 92 percent of the direct protection fires at under 10 acres in size. The charts are based on direct protection and county assist fires.

Fire Training

The Fire and Aviation Management Bureau provides training in fire prevention, detection, investigation, suppression, aviation, communications, safety, prescribed fire, participation on incident management teams, and wildland fire training instruction.

In FY 2002, DNRC conducted or consolidated 230 courses in wildland fire training serving 2,447 volunteer and career firefighters in 56 counties throughout the State/County Cooperative Fire Protection Program and DNRC's seasonal and fire support personnel. Fifty-four Basic Wildland and Intermediate Wildland Fire Fighting courses with 1,001 attending were conducted by DNRC specifically for local government forces. In addition, DNRC cooperated in each of the five Northern Rockies zones that completed approximately 250 courses serving over 5,000 interagency firefighters.

To meet the need for firefighters for the 2002 fire season, DNRC facilitated the training of National Guard, aviation, and support personnel.

DNRC is actively involved in the development of overhead and management personnel within the agency in cooperation with other wildland fire agencies, in local communities, statewide, and at the Northern Rockies Interagency Training Center in Missoula.

Development and Support

Through its Equipment Development Program, DNRC obtains federal excess property and develops it into fire suppression equipment and vehicles. This equipment is used primarily to support the State/County Cooperative Fire Protection Program. In FY 2002, DNRC obtained supplies, vehicles, and aircraft that have a total value of \$5,160,087 through the Federal Excess Property Program. The equipment acquired included a total of 20 vehicles and aircraft.

The 57 individual development projects that were completed in FY 2002 are listed in Table 13.

Table 13
Development Projects in FY 2002

Develop Type 6 (200-gallon) wildland engines	10
Develop Type 5 (500-gallon) engines	2
Develop Type 3 (750-gallon) engine	1
Develop county potable water tank	1
Develop county support truck (pantry)	1
Develop prison crew vehicles	2
Rebuild flatbeds	8
Rebuild pump panels	12
Rebuild pump heads	20

Aviation

The Aviation Section operates and maintains a fleet of eight aircraft. The fleet consists of five helicopters and three fixed-wing airplanes. The three fixed-wing aircraft, Cessna 180 series that are used primarily for fire patrol and personnel transportation, are located in Helena, Missoula, and Kalispell. The section operates three Bell UH-1 series type 2 helicopters at Helena, Missoula, and Kalispell in support of DNRC's initial attack fire suppression program. Two light, type 3 helicopters (Bell 206 B-III) are stationed in Helena. One is owned by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). DNRC maintains this aircraft and provides pilot services to DEQ. In return, DNRC reserves the right to use this aircraft for fire missions. The second light helicopter is used as a backup aircraft or for additional coverage.

In FY 2002 the aircraft flew a total of 980 hours. Other program statistics are shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14
Aviation Program Accomplishments in FY 2002

Water/retardant dropped	897,802 gallons
Fire administration	28 hours
Fire detection/reconnaissance	481 hours
Fire—other	30 hours
Fire suppression—initial attack and extended attack	267 hours
Fire suppression—project ¹	35 hours
Fire training	36 hours
Non-fire missions	87 hours
False alarm	16 hours
TOTAL	980 hours

1. Project fires are large fires with organized fire management teams.

The FY 2002 fire season was an average year for aircraft hours utilized in initial attack and suppression. The state contracted for a medium helicopter that operated primarily out of Libby. The average price for the contract medium helicopter in FY 2002 was \$4,000 per day, plus approximately \$1,500 per hour operating cost. That is \$16,000 per day to operate that aircraft, compared to \$7,000 per day for the state aircraft with a similar load capacity.

National Fire Plan

After the 2000 wildfire season, Congress authorized funding within the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to implement the National Fire Plan (NFP). The National Fire Plan is a long-term strategy for reducing the effects of catastrophic wildfires throughout the nation. There are five key points to the National Fire Plan.

- Increase in fire suppression capabilities (firefighting)
- Rehabilitation of burned areas and restoration of landscapes
- Reduction of hazardous fuels
- Assistance to communities
- Accountability to the public and to Congress

The Western Governors' Association has developed a *10-Year Comprehensive Strategy* and an implementation plan, titled *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment*. These documents provide direction at the national, regional, state, and local levels on National Fire Plan issues.

NFP funding to the states occurs under the community assistance point and is made available through the USFS state and private forestry programs. DNRC has responsibility for delivery of these programs on state-owned and private lands in Montana.

The DNRC NFP Program is implemented primarily within the Forestry Division's Fire and Aviation Management Bureau and Service Forestry Bureau. The National Fire Plan is delivered, wherever appropriate, through existing state and private forestry programs. These programs are:

- County Cooperative Fire Program (Fire and Aviation Management Bureau)
- State Fire Assistance Program (Fire and Aviation Management Bureau)
- Private Forestry Assistance Program (Service Forestry Bureau)
- Stewardship Program (Service Forestry Bureau)

The NFP accomplishments for these programs are included in this section. For more information about these programs, or to learn about accomplishments separate from the National Fire Plan, refer to the sections of this report called Fire and Aviation Management and Service Forestry Programs.

Volunteer and Rural Fire Assistance

The Volunteer and Rural Fire Assistance (VFA/RFA) Program provides assistance to county fire agencies for equipment, training, and fire prevention materials. Adding National Fire Plan funding resulted in a grant program with more money than ever before. The historical average for the program is approximately \$30,000 per

All of these projects address one or more of the following areas.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction

Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc.

Information and Education in the Wildland/Urban Interface

Homeowners and local government bear much of the responsibility for improving the defensibility of homes in the interface, but may lack knowledge and information regarding what needs to be done and how to do it.

Homeowner and Community Action

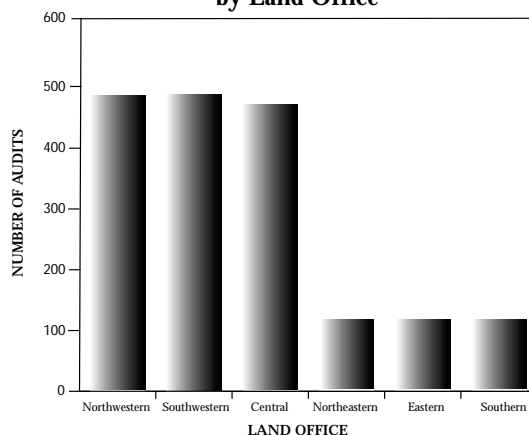
Creating conditions in and around individual structures that will limit the transmission of fire from wildland to structures is basic to reducing the fire hazard in the interface. This is a responsibility of homeowners and communities.

A cost-share program in the tri-counties area around Helena provides homeowners with financial and technical assistance to reduce hazardous fuels around their homes. In FY 2002, 270 homeowners in Jefferson and Lewis and Clark Counties initiated fuel reduction around their homes. Another 150 applications for assistance are pending.

Defensible Space Home Audit Program

The Fire and Aviation Management Bureau has created a new home inspection program for homeowners residing within the wildland/urban interface. A free, one-hour consultation provides homeowners with an assessment, suggestions about creating defensible space, and resource materials for performing risk reduction activities. In some cases, homeowners are also eligible for cost-share assistance to do the work. DNRC is partnering with fire departments and private forestry consultants to meet the demands for free Defensible Space Audits.

Figure 13
Homeowner Defensible Space Audits
by Land Office



The benefits of the audits are threefold. First, it's an economic benefit for local fire departments that are paid to perform the home inspections. Second, it's an opportunity to build relationships between homeowners and those who would be the emergency responders in the event of a wildland fire emergency. Third, property owners gain valuable information about fire prevention and defensible space.

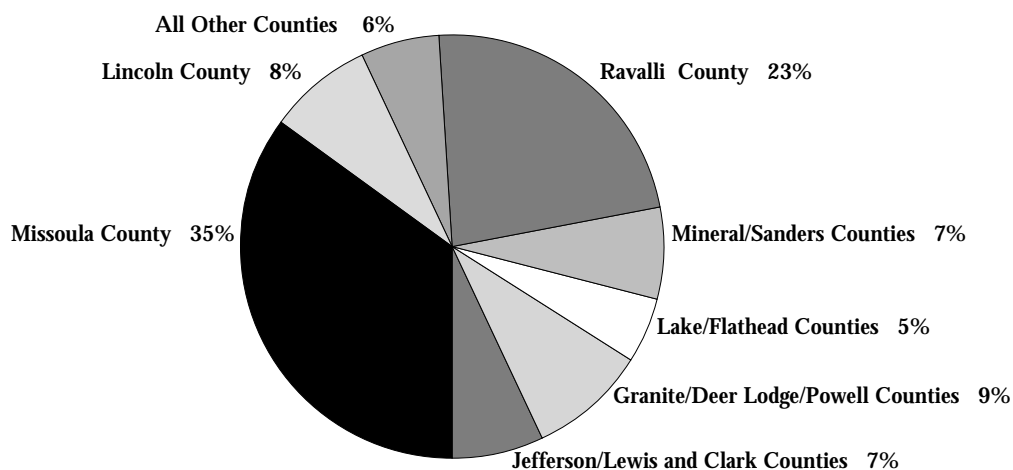
The distribution of home audits per DNRC land office is shown in Figure 13. Approximately 1,400 of the total 1,800 audits were completed in Fiscal Year 2002. The remaining audits will be completed in Fiscal Year 2003.

Private Forestry Assistance

Within the Service Forestry Bureau's Stewardship Program, National Fire Plan funding supports a new cost-share grant program for private landowners. In a partnership with Montana's conservation districts, DNRC service foresters assist landowners in implementing land management activities that rehabilitate burned areas and/or reduce the risk of wildfires to their homes and property. Key outcomes of this cost-share program are the development of approved land management plans and treatment of private land acreage.

As seen in Figure 14, which shows the distribution of projects, more work has been done in Missoula and Ravalli Counties. In 2000 Ravalli County was the site of several large fires, including the Sula Complex. Missoula County was the site of the Ryan Gulch Fire.

Figure 14
Distribution of Private Forestry Assistance Projects



Service Forestry Programs

DNRC's service forestry programs provide products and services to various client groups and individuals. The State Nursery grows seedlings for private conservation plantings and reforestation of state-owned lands. Education emphasizing the stewardship and care of forestlands is presented to private forest owners and resource professionals. Communities are assisted with the care and planting of their community forests. Montana's forest laws are upheld. Private forestland improvements are administered using federal cost-share funds. Forest health problems are identified and monitored statewide.

Bureau officials are strategically involved with coordinating and delivering National Fire Plan programs (see preceding section of this report). One example is conservation district and service forestry officials, working together, created a cost-share program to help forest landowners impacted by the fires in 2000. This program continued in FY 2002. In addition to assisting landowners impacted by fires in 2000 and 2001, the cost-share program also assists forest landowners with fuel hazard reduction to reduce wildlife risk and severity.

State Nursery

DNRC's nursery produces, sells, and distributes seedlings for conservation plantings such as reforestation, farmstead windbreaks, fire restoration, shelterbelts, wildlife habitat, living snow fences, stream bank stabilization, and other conservation uses. The nursery provides seedlings to private landowners in Montana, the DNRC Trust Land Management Division, Conservation Reserve Program, Forest Stewardship Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Pheasants Forever, reforestation efforts, and numerous other conservation programs and organizations.

In FY 2002 the nursery sold 902,672 conservation seedlings and produced 98,623 seedlings for reforestation of school trust lands, for a total of 1,001,295 seedlings, as itemized in Table 15.

Table 15
Nursery Seedling Sales from FY 1998 to FY 2003

Fiscal Year	Conservation Seedling Program				Trust Land Seedling Program			Total Nursery Production
	Seedling Production	Seedlings Delivered	Nursery Revenue	Nursery Expenditures	Seedlings Requested	Seedlings Delivered	Seedling Expenditures	
1998	646,800	574,125	\$239,381	\$236,374	180,125	170,217	\$46,125	817,017
1999	903,800	859,750	\$244,427	\$244,089	127,565	130,326	\$39,231	1,034,126
2000	740,294	712,230	\$272,142	\$272,799	82,130	79,592	\$41,209	819,886
2001	927,677	881,877	\$346,884	\$339,072	201,334	173,341	\$44,767	1,101,018
2002	961,972	902,672	\$368,912	\$363,263	126,300	98,623	\$43,189	1,083,009
2003 est.	908,675	872,025	\$350,000	\$350,000	77,500			986,175

Seedling sales decreased slightly in FY 2002 because of reduced requests for school trust land seedlings and greatly reduced sales of riparian species due to the drought conditions in the state. Seedling production for school trust lands has temporarily slowed due to the limited availability of suitable pine seed for reforestation of lands burned in 2000. Revenue received from conservation seedling sales increased by 6.4 percent in FY 2002 to \$368,912. All nursery program expenditures were recovered from the sale of seedlings, with \$5,649 carried over to FY 2003 in the nursery special revenue account for future capital equipment upgrades.

Table 16
Conservation Seedling Use in FY 2002

Conservation Practice	Number of Seedlings	Number of Landowners
Reforestation	486,997	94
Wildlife habitat	172,600	177
Farmstead windbreaks	151,450	502
Field shelterbelts	44,300	75
Stream stabilization	19,250	34
Living snow fences	6,700	27
Erosion control	1,550	4
All other uses	19,845	77
TOTAL	902,692	990

DNRC nursery seedlings were planted in every county in the state with the greatest number going to Big Horn, Ravalli, Missoula, Cascade, Fergus, and Broadwater Counties. Nine hundred and ninety landowners planted state-grown conservation seedlings. The numbers of seedlings used in various conservation practices are itemized in Table 16.

The nursery maintains 40 seed orchards of selected plant materials adapted to the numerous environments present in Montana. In FY 2002 the American plum seed orchard was expanded to increase seed production. Stooling blocks used for collection of propagation cuttings for six species were rehabilitated or expanded. Establishment and maintenance of seed orchards at the nursery ensures the long-term availability of Montana-adapted plant materials to landowners in the state. In FY 2002, the nursery collected, processed, or purchased 403 pounds of seed from the seed orchards, private vendors, or field collections in the state.

Forest Pest Management

This program provides pest surveys, training, and technical services to help recognize and manage damaging insects and diseases in Montana's forests. These activities are done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Region Forest Health Protection Group.

Douglas-fir beetle populations continued to increase in many parts of western Montana, particularly in forest areas that were significantly affected by fire in 2000 and 2001. Populations of mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine stands continued to expand in the Lolo, Flathead, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest areas in western Montana. The most expansive outbreak was in the Lolo National Forest area, where almost 69,000 acres were infested.

Defoliation by western spruce budworm was detected east of the Continental Divide in the Helena National Forest area. Douglas-fir defoliation by both hemlock looper and western false hemlock looper was observed in several parts of the state, including around Flathead Lake and east of Missoula. The Douglas-fir tussock moth defoliation in the Flathead Indian Reservation was monitored. Many of the trees that had been defoliated in 2000 put on new growth in 2001. One gypsy moth was caught in a trap at Swiftcurrent campground in Glacier National Park. A delimitation survey is planned around the campground in 2002.

Mortality and growth losses from root disease continued to be high throughout the state. The effect of the fires of 2000 and 2001 on root diseases is one of opportunity. The tree species that are best adapted to low intensity, high frequency fires are those species that are also root-disease-tolerant, such as western larch and ponderosa pine. In the root-diseased areas that burned, there is the opportunity to reduce the effects from root disease by planting these species or encouraging their natural regeneration.

Dwarf mistletoe continued to cause losses of approximately 33 million cubic feet annually, mostly to Douglas-fir, western larch, and lodgepole pine. Fire events that kill infected trees will reduce the population of dwarf mistletoes.

White pine blister rust continued to be present throughout the range of five-needle pines (limber pine, whitebark pine, and western white pine) in the state and was most severe in the northwestern portion, where it continued to cause extensive mortality in western white pine.

Elytroderma needle blight continued to be heavy in ponderosa pine in localized areas across western and central Montana. Rhabdocline needle cast was present in Douglas-fir in large areas across the state.

Some of the FY 2002 program accomplishments are listed in Table 17.

Table 17 Forest Pest Management Activities in FY 2002	
Technical assistance to private and industrial land managers	51 assists
Professionals trained in basic pest identification	16
Professionals trained in advanced pest management	16
Loggers and private landowners trained in pest identification and management	16
Pest samples identified and management treatments recommended	27
Aerial survey completed and sketch maps distributed to unit offices	3 million acres
DNRC timber sale analyses written	4

The program, along with USFS, also completed and distributed the annual *Montana Insect and Disease Conditions* report.

The second year of work was completed under a mutual contract developed by Montana and Idaho for forest pathology services and funded by a USFS grant.

Forestry Assistance

The Forestry Assistance Program provides a range of services to private forest landowners and economic development organizations. By conveying forestry knowledge, this program helps Montanans perform forestry work that results in good land stewardship, a healthful environment, personal profit, and general economic growth.

In FY 2002, DNRC provided 1,054 forestry assists, including 66 timber sale assists and 129 National Fire Plan assists. Many informational and educational assists result in actions taken on the ground by non-industrial forest landowners. During FY 2002, 208 follow-up actions were taken. Of the 208, 180 assists on 4,336 acres included such activities as insect and disease prevention, wildlife enhancement, forest range improvement, and reforestation. In FY 2002, production of 2,051 thousand board feet (MBF) resulted from 23 previous assists on 1,054 acres of non-industrial forestlands.

Service foresters provided 586 person days of education, the most notable of which were the Streamside Management/Best Management Practices (BMP) workshops.

Timber Slash

The Timber Slash Program implements state laws pertaining to control of timber slash and debris on private land to minimize wildfire hazards. The department carries out its responsibilities by entering into a bonded contract, called a Hazard Reduction Agreement (HRA), with the private party in charge of each cutting. The program handled 1,067 new HRAs in FY 2002 (see Figure 15), while another 1,150 HRAs were certified and closed. Those numbers are a 6.5 percent decrease

in new HRAs and a 12 percent decrease in closings, compared to FY 2001 levels, which can be attributed to the declining price of lumber.

In FY 2002, the Timber Slash Program collected \$91,742 in administrative fees. In addition, a total of \$55,095 was collected and distributed to Montana State University's Extension Forestry Program.

Forest Practices

The Forest Practices Program provides information and education about forestry BMPs to private persons, corporations, and other agencies. The program also includes standards for all forest practices conducted in streamside management zones (SMZs). The program helps people comply with voluntary and mandatory measures that protect soil and water resources during timber harvesting operations. In FY 2002, the services listed in Table 18 were provided.

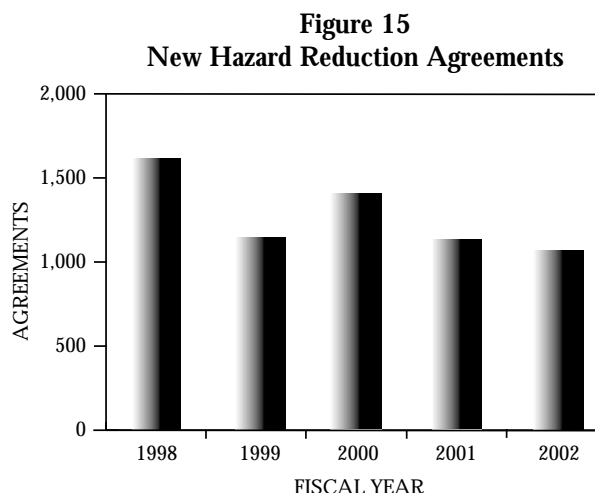


Table 18
Forest Practices Activities in FY 2002

BMP pre-harvest informational packages mailed to landowners	1,141
On-site consultations	105
Post-harvest evaluations	22
Alternative practices issued	39
SMZ enforcement actions taken	7

In cooperation with the Montana Loggers Association, the program conducted seven SMZ/BMP field workshops for loggers. This year's workshops provided education and information to 202 individuals across the state.

Community Forestry

Now in its twelfth year as a national program created in the 1990 Farm Bill, the Urban and Community Forestry Program continues to grow in Montana. The mission of the program remains the same: to have a viable program in every community in the state. However, the needs of Montana communities continue to change and expand. Wildland/urban interface, urban sprawl, and community planning have added a new complexity to program fundamentals like tree planting, maintenance, and removal. As more Montanans come to appreciate natural areas and resources within their cities and towns, the program becomes more and more relevant to them.

The program assists community leaders, volunteers, local governments, and the tree care industry with technical assistance, planning, funding for local programs, volunteer coordination, and education. The program works closely with several

major partners, including federal agencies, Montana RC&D areas, the university system, and private organizations. Staff also participate in the Montana League of Cities and Towns, local tree and park boards, and volunteer organizations.

Major categories of assistance are shown in Table 19.

Table 19 Major Categories of Community Forestry Activities in FY 2002	
Communities with active programs	66
Montana "Tree City USAs" ¹	28
Communities receiving technical assistance	93
Technology transfer activities (workshops, presentations, conferences, training sessions)	154

1. "Tree City" is a national program through the Arbor Day Foundation.

Highlights of the Community Forestry Program for FY 2002 follow.

For the second year, the Montana Community Forestry Program offered the Arbor Day Grants Program. Any community in the state wishing to celebrate Arbor Day could apply for a \$150 grant to help with its event. A total of 60 grants were awarded by the program, which is nearly double the number of grants given last year, and several communities held Arbor Day ceremonies for the first time. An Arbor Day celebration is one of the requirements for a community to receive Tree City USA designation.

Another significant accomplishment for the program this year was the addition of three Tree City USAs. All three communities were new to the Tree City USA Program. The program offered a Tree City USA Reward Program, and each of the three new Tree Cities received a \$500 grant for its program. Up to five more communities may be designated new Tree Cities next year.

The Montana Community Forestry Council elected new Executive Committee members and will present community forestry awards to outstanding communities and individuals at the Montana League of Cities and Towns Annual Conference in Butte in October.

The program continues to be active in the Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMC) of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). This year, ISA-RMC and the Montana Community Forestry Program hosted a Plant Health Care/Tree Nutrition Workshop for tree care professionals across Montana. Additionally, a DNRC Community Forestry Program staff member is serving as the statewide representative to ISA.